

REMARKS

Claims 9, 12, 16 and 20 have been amended based on the disclosure at page 30, lines 19-21 and in the paragraph bridging pages 30-31 in the specification. Claim 23 has been added based on the disclosure at page 30, lines 19-21 in the specification. Claims 24 and 25 have been added based on the disclosure at page 68, lines 2-6 in the specification. The non-elected claims have been canceled without prejudice to the filing of a divisional application directed thereto.

Entry of the above amendment is respectfully requested.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. 112, Second Paragraph

On page 2 of the Office Action, in paragraph 3, claims 9-14, 16, and 20-22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite.

The Examiner's Position

Based on the reasons given by the Examiner, the Examiner's position is as follows:

(1) Independent claims 9, 12, 16, and 20 recite "fine particles". However, the Examiner considers that the term "fine" is a relative term which is not defined by the claims, and the specification does not provide a standard for ascertaining the requisite degree, so one of ordinary skill in the art would not be reasonably apprised of the scope of the invention.

(2) Independent claims 9, 12, 16, and 20 have been amended to recite that the particles "do not interact with a hydrophilic functional group of the graft polymer". However, the Examiner considers that it is unclear what is meant by "do not interact". In particular, the Examiner wonders whether Applicants intend to recite that the particles do not ionically interact with hydrophilic functional group of the graft polymer or that the particles do not interact with

the hydrophilic functional group of the graft polymer such that the movement of the particles is not hindered.

Applicants' Response

Applicants' response to each of the issues raised by the Examiner is as follows:

(1) With respect to the first issue raised by the Examiner, Applicants have amended the independent claims to recite that the fine particles have a diameter in a range from 0.1 nm to 20 μ m, based on the disclosure at page 30, lines 19-20 in the application.

(2) As to the second issue raised by the Examiner, Applicants have amended the independent claims to further clarify that the particles do not interact with the hydrophilic functional group of the graft polymer "such that the movement of the particles is not hindered", based on the disclosure at the end of the paragraph bridging pages 30-31 in the application. Further, Applicants believe that such an amendment should be acceptable to the Examiner based on the discussion at lines 8-9 on page 3 of the Office Action.

Thus, Applicants submit that the amended claims satisfy the requirements of 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Art Rejections

On page 3 of the Office Action, in paragraph 4, claims 9-14, 16, and 20-22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Kawamura et al. (US 6,811,878 B2). Also, on page 5 of the Office Action, in paragraph 5, claims 9-14, 16, and 20-22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Kawamura et al. (US 6,566,029).

In response, Applicants note initially that the claims have been amended to recite that the particles do not interact with the hydrophilic functional group of the graft polymer "such that the movement of the particles is not hindered".

Applicants submit that the cited references do not anticipate (or render obvious) the amended claims because, e.g., the ionic binding in Kawamura '878 would hinder the movement of the particles, and the functional group capable of mutually acting with the hydrophilic graft polymer in Kawamura '029 would also hinder the movement of the particles.

Thus, Applicants submit that the present invention is patentable over the cited references, and withdrawal of the art rejections is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

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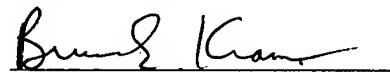
WASHINGTON OFFICE

23373

CUSTOMER NUMBER

Date: September 4, 2007

Respectfully submitted,



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